

Same-sex and Cross-sex Teasing Categories and Reactions among Jadara University Students

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Received: April 13, 2011 Accepted: April 20, 2011 doi:10.5296/ijl.v3i1.930

Abstract

Teasing is a universal phenomenon that is not confined to a certain nation, age, class, or even level of education. Teasing is mostly a disliked behavior that can be verbal or non-verbal meant to achieve a desired aim of the teaser on the teased target. It has various definitions, objectives and reasons. Teasing is double-edged; it can be innocent or malicious. The sample of this study consisted of 110 undergraduates (53 males and 57 females). It was carried out at five different intervals. It aimed to answer three questions concerning same-sex, cross-sex teasing categories and reactions. The findings of the study revealed that female-same-sex teasing expressions could be categorized under underestimation, criticism, physical appearance, academic competence, clothing, and imitation, whereas male-same-sex expressions could be categorized under underestimation, describing the target as an animal or something bad, physical appearance, relationships, cursing, and rumor. Teasing expressions directed from females to males could be categorized under underestimation, academic competence, and describing the target as an animal or something bad while teasing expressions directed from males to females could be categorized under physical appearance, underestimation, describing the teased target as an animal or something bad, clothing, and academic competence. The reactions of both females and males were the same as their reactions to the first teasing expression were mostly positive, and to the second one were mostly negative. The use of the teasing categories arrived at by the study were attributed to matters of interest among both same-sex and cross-sex. Impact of cultural background, mood, and mixing with others could also play a role in employing a certain teasing category or reaction to a teasing expression.

Key words: Teasing, Cross-sex, Same-sex, Categories, Reactions

1. Introduction

Teasing has got a number of definitions according to dictionary. Eisenberg (1986) defined teasing as "any conversational sequence that opened with a mock challenge, insult, or threat" (pp : 183-184). The "Free Online Dictionary" provides three lexical meanings that suit the objectives of this study. These definitions are: 1) to annoy or pester, vex; 2) to make fun of, mock playfully; 3) to arouse, desire, or curiosity in without affording satisfaction. Aho (1998) ascertains that school teasing was extremely common among pupils in almost every class. Though teasing has become a phenomenon, it was not given serious investigation until the eighties of the previous century. Thus, people are exposed to teasing willingly or unwillingly as it is practiced on them or by them intentionally and unintentionally. Here, teasing is nearly a verbal or nonverbal behavior practiced everyday by a certain type of people on others in some way or another to achieve the desired goal of the teaser.

Teasing is double-edged as there are two types of message that can be conveyed through it. The first type can be called "**innocent teasing**". This type is mostly practiced by parents, older brothers, sisters, even close relatives or sometimes friends to enhance someone's abilities to do better in certain situations. For example, in old local folktales, there used to be a generous man who used to invite his friends and offer them nice and tasty food. This man had a son. When the father died, his friends kept visiting his son for food. The son did not cook them nice food as his father used to do. One of these men tried to tease the son positively to cook them nice food. He said to him regretting the father and urging the son to follow his father's steps, "God bless your father; he used to be a cock killer/ *rahima allahu abaaka, kana d^habahu adiaka/*. The son responded: have lentils, onions, and forget about that/ *'des wa absul watruk balak min d^haak/*. The second type of teasing can be called "**malicious teasing**". This type is practiced by people with certain characteristics. Friedman (1999) emphasizes this duality of the message conveyed by teasing as a literal message of insult and a metamessage of playfulness. Additionally, Snike, Sorger, Goebel, and Gelder (2010) support the duality of message conveyed by bodily teasing expressions: "Yet sometimes we need to be able to rapidly appraise whether an interaction between two people represents a real threat for one of them rather than an innocent tease (p: 1)."

According to Goldstein (2005: 2), previous research found out that the most common form of teasing entails making fun of someone or something through certain behaviors. Shapiro et al., (1991) mentioned delivering sarcasm, tricking the target person into believing something, using exaggerated imitation, pointing, making faces, physically pestering, taking an item such as the target's hat and refusing to give it back. However, teasing strategies or behaviors vary according to age. Cash, 1995; Kelly & Cohn, 1988; Tizard, Blatchford, Burke, & Plewis, 1988) concluded that children and adolescents mostly tease each other about their physical appearance (being overweight), intellectual performance (being very slow), physical and athletic performance, family members, interest in the opposite or same sex, personal hygiene, race, fearfulness, promiscuity, psychological problems, handicapping conditions, and name calling, especially mentioning the mother's name or titles in the Jordanian culture.

As teasing is a universal phenomenon, there should be some reasons and purposes behind it. Freedman (1999:2) named six reasons behind teasing among children. These reasons are: 1) Attention: many children resort to this action to attract other's attention in one way or another though this attention could be a negative one; 2) Imitation: children tend to imitate what is practiced on them by others at home or those who experience aggressive or harsh parenting; 3) Feelings of superiority or power: Some teasers feel superior when they put others down or they may feel powerful when teasing upsets others (Olweus, 1993); 4) Peer acceptance: some teasers use teasing in this respect as a way of feeling part of a group, which could be the

most popular one; 5) Misunderstanding differences: a lack of understanding of "differences" may be the underlying factor in some teasing. Some children might be unfamiliar with cultural and ethnic differences, or even special disabilities; 6) Media influence: media plays a great role in teaching children violence, which teasing could be its easiest form. Many television programs geared toward children show that they are not respected, are put-down, and are frequently exposed to teasing. On the other hand, Dallinger and Prince (1984) identified the purposes and goals of teasing as fun/affection, hurt, compliance gaining, jealousy, and revenge.

Teasing could have some bad impact on teased people and somehow bad results on both the teasers and teased ones if it is taken seriously. It could lead to heightened levels of body dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, and emotional disturbance for boys (Eisenberg et al. 2003) and girls (Wertheim, Koerner & Paxton, 2001).

1.1 Review of related literature

The literature reviewed mostly studied teasing from a psychological point of view. It concentrated on its goals and responses, reasons, the role of personality trait, and as a form of verbal aggression.

Dallinger and Prince (1984) carried out three exploratory studies to investigate the goals and responses of conversational teasing episodes. The results indicated that 1) teasing occurred primarily between friends and family members; 2) people attributed more positive than negative motives to teasers; 3) most responses to teasing were positive emotions; and 4) teasing is a communication activity.

Shapiro et al (1991) carried out a survey to investigate the teased target's responses to teasing expressions. Their survey revealed that 10% responded by fighting, 40% responded by teasing back, 25% tried to ignore the teasing expression, and 12% replied that they usually laughed with the teaser.

Mottet and Thweat (1997) investigated teasing as a form of verbal aggression among undergraduate students. The results of the study revealed that the most often cited loci of attack were grades, study habits, weight, friends, clothing, and height.

Bollmer, Harris, Milich, and Georgsen (2003) investigated how global personality traits and teasing history are related to same-sex participants with emotional and behavioral reactions to an actual teasing event. The findings of the study revealed that even mild teasing can generate negativity towards the teaser and interaction. It also revealed childhood teasing history moderated reactions to teasing as frequent victims and frequent teasers responded in different ways.

Beck et al (2007) reported that teasing appeared to be an important form of socialization. Teasing was used as a means of bonding, flirting among college men and women.

Levy (2004) identified some gender differences concerning teasing between boys and girls. On the one hand, she made clear that boys tend to embarrass each other by commenting about areas of weakness or questioning their manhood whereas girls tend to be subtle with their teasing by spreading rumors, excluding girls from the group, and making fun of their appearance. On the other hand, she attributed teasing in older age to interest in the opposite sex and to mask it for fear of being teased themselves. This supports the general impression in fighting or engaging in wars which says "Attack is the best strategy for defense".

1.2 Problem and significance of the study

Violence actions at Jordanian universities have increased recently until they have become a clear widespread phenomenon. The reasons behind these actions might not be clear-cut to decision makers. These actions do not end inside the university, but they expand outside the university. This expansion will engage large numbers of people who will interfere to solve a big problem that resulted from a teasing expression or behavior. This engagement costs money, time, and effort. Moreover, it hinders the progress wheel and conveys a negative picture of the country.

The significance of this study stems from its being an attempt to explore the teasing forms and expressions employed by Jordanian university students to arrive at appropriate solutions through carrying out other studies in the area to solve this problem.

Furthermore, this study combines sociology and psychology with linguistics as teasing is a speech act which requires a special social background and a certain personality trait to enable the teaser to tease the target and the target to react appropriately (positively or negatively). These also require good rhetoric and language skills to reflect what should be said or done by both the teaser and the target. Thus, this study forms a socio-psycho-linguistic one.

Lytra (2007: 382) pointed out that teasing as a speech act genre like swearing and telling jokes is a central social practice, and sociolinguistic studies have shifted the research agenda to teasing exchanges in the context of linguistically, culturally, socially and ethically homogeneous peer groups which Pratt (1987: 56) called "linguistics of contact."

1.3 Objectives of the study

This study aimed at the following objectives:

1. Investigating the categories under which same-sex and cross-sex teasing expressions employed by Jadara University students undergo.
2. Investigating same-sex responses and reactions to some teasing expressions thrown by same-sex.

1.4 Questions of the study

The study aimed at answering the following questions:

1. What are the categories of teasing expressions employed by same-sex students?
2. What are the forms of teasing expressions employed by cross-sex participants?
3. What are the responses to some teasing expressions employed by same-sex?

1.5 Sample of the study

The sample of the study consisted of 110 university students. These students have differences in the academic level, age, and major of study. Concerning the cultural background, some of them come from countryside, others come from urban areas (cities), and others come from nomadic areas. In addition, some of them come from Jordanian origins and some of them come from Palestinian origins. This means they speak different accents of Jordanian and Palestinian Arabic named respectively: Fallahi, Madani, and Badawi. However, all the subjects of the study were Muslims and Arabs with the Jordanian Nationality.

1.6 Data collection and analysis

The data necessary for the study were collected at five different intervals. During the first two intervals, the researcher asked the participants the following two questions:

1. How could you tease the same-sex?

2. How could you tease the other sex?

During the third interval, the researcher asked the participants the following questions:

1. What is/are the expression/expressions that you use to tease some one of the same-sex?
2. What is/are the expression/expressions that you use to tease some one of the other sex?

During the fourth and fifth intervals, the researcher selected two same-sex teasing expressions provided by the participants and asked them how they would respond to these teasing expressions. So he asked the participants the following questions: (the first was directed to male students and the second was directed to female students).

1. What is/ are your response/responses to the following expressions?

1.a: Your eyes are like glass balls, and your ears are like satellite gleaners. ('yunak zai ad dwahel wa ad^haank zai lwaaqet as satellite)

1.b: Damn you. Your beard looks like the ram's beard. Sab'ak bi halihiah mit^hl lihiah at tais)

2. What is/ are your response/responses to the following expressions?

2.a: You are treacherous, and pragmatic. How could donkeys realize how to smell roses? (anti xaineh wa sahibat maslahah, shu: faham elhameer bisham elward!.

2.b: Why have you changed? You used to be more beautiful. (laish mitg^haireh! kunti ahla.)

The questions and procedures of collecting and analyzing the data necessary for the present study, to a large extent, differ from previous studies. Previous studies mostly depended on analyzing teasing episodes or teasing among confederates that might have a teaser, teased target, and an audience while this study does not assume good knowledge between the teaser and the target in conversational duets.

As the answers of the sample are written and the subjects speak different accents of Jordanian Arabic, the researcher transcribed the answers in a somewhat standardized dialect of Jordanian Arabic that compromises all three accents and fits the objectives of this study.

2. Findings of the study

To answer the questions of the study, the researcher categorized the participants' responses under certain categories arrived at from previous literature with some modification depending on the answers provided.

2.1 Question one: *What are the categories of teasing expressions employed by same-sex students participants?*

As this question examined the forms of teasing expressions employed by same-sex, its answer was divided into two parts; the first part clarifies the females' responses, and the second part clarifies the males' responses.

2.1.1 Females' responses revealed that they employed a number of teasing forms to tease other females

The analysis of their responses showed that they employed:

A. Underestimation/Insult: Here are some of the responses which the females used to tease other females' through underestimation or insult:

- i. You are nothing to me. (anti wala shi benesbati li.)
- ii. You are jealous. (anti g^hiorah.)
- iii. You are psychologically ill. (anti maridah nafsian.)

How donkeys could realize how to smell roses! (shu: faham elhameer bisham elward!.)

iv. You are a liar. (anti kad^habeh.)

B. Criticism: Here are some of the responses which the females used to tease other females through commenting on a certain behavior to express their criticism:

- i. Criticizing how a girl talks.
- ii. Criticizing how a girl walks.
- iii. Criticizing how a girl wears or chooses her clothes.

C. Physical appearance: Here are some of the responses which the females used to tease other females' appearance:

- i. Why have you been changed? You used to be more beautiful. (laish mitghaireh! kunti ahla.)
- ii. You are not beautiful. (anti mish hilwah.)
- iii. You are ugly. (anti bish'ah.)

D. Academic competence: Here are some the responses which females used to tease other females' academic competence:

- i. You are fool. (inti g^habiah.)
- ii. X is cleverer than you and you will never be like her. (fulaneh ashtar minki wmish momken tsiri zaiha.)

E. Clothing: Here are some the responses which females used to tease other females' clothing:

- i. Your clothes are not beautiful. (malabisuki laisat jamlah.)
- ii. Learn neatness from X. (ta'alami alanaqah min fulaneh.)

F. Imitation: Here is a behavioral response which shows imitation as a form of teasing used by females to tease other females':

- i. Imitating the way she talks literally.

2.1.2 Males' responses revealed that they employed a number of teasing forms to tease other males.

The analysis of their responses showed that they employed:

A. Underestimation: Here are some of the expressions which the males used to underestimate other males:

- i. You do not understand. (inteh ma btefham)
- ii. You are mean. (ya nad^hel)
- iii. You are cheap. (inteh raxies)
- iv. You do not look like men. (ma'aleik haibat az zulum)
- v. I do not know how you would marry and open a house. (ana mish 'aref keif badak tijawaz wteftah beit)

B. Describing the teased target as an animal or something bad: Here are some of the responses which the males used to describe other males as an animal or something useless:

- i. You are a pig. (inteh xanzier)
- ii. You are funny as a male sheep. (inteh mudhek, mithl alxaroof)
- iii. Damn you with this head, like a hedgehog. (sanhak bi hadha ar ras mithl alqunfudh)
- iv. Damn you with this beard, like a ram's beard. (sab'ak bi halihiah mithl lihiaht at tais)

v. You are a buckle/clasp. (ya bziem)

C. Physical appearance: Here are some of the responses concerning the physical appearance which the males used to tease other males:

- i. Your eyes are like glass-balls. ('yunak zai ad dwahel)
- ii. Your ears are like satellite gleaners. (ad^haank zai lwaaqet as satellite)
- iii. Your outlook is ugly. (mand^harak bashe')
- iv. Are you satisfied with your outlook? (hal inteh raden 'n mand^harak?)

D. Relationships: Here are some of the responses which the males used to tease other males through describing or spoiling their relationships:

- i. You are not worth being a friend of mine. (la tastahiq an takoon sadieqan li)
- ii. You are irresponsible when dealing with others. (inteh mustahter fi ta'amulik m' an nas)
- iii. Talking to the beloved girl of the male target. (almuhadad^heh m' habiebtuh)

E. Cursing: Here are some of the curses which males used to curse other males to tease them:

- i. Damn you with this head, like a hedgehog. (sanhak bi had^ha ar ras mit^hl alqunfud^h)
- ii. Damn you with this beard, like a ram's beard. (sab'ak bi halihiah mit^hl lihiaht at tais)

F. Gossip/rumor: Here are some of the gossip/rumor forms which the males used to spread about other males to tease them.

- i. Devising a funny joke about the target. (ixtira' nukteh mudhikah 'liah)
- ii. A girl said you are very nasty. (benet hakat 'anak ma aznaxak)

2.2 Question two: What are the categories of teasing expressions employed by cross-sex participants?

As this question examined the forms of teasing expressions employed cross-sex, its answer was divided into two parts; the first part clarifies the females' responses concerning the expressions females use to tease males, and the second part clarifies the males' responses concerning the expressions males use to tease females.

2.2.1 Females' responses revealed that they employed a number of teasing expressions to tease males.

The analysis of their responses showed that they employed:

A. Underestimation/Insult: Here are some of the responses which the females used to tease males' through underestimation or insult:

- i. When you become a man, come and talk with me. (lama tsier zalameh, ta'al ihki ma'i.)
- ii. You have no personality. (inteh ma 'indak shaxsiah.)
- iii. You are a liar. (inteh kad^haab.)
- iv. You are careless. (inteh muhmil.)
- v. You are the most ridiculous person I've ever seen. (inteh asxaf insaan shuftu fi haiati.)

B. Academic competence: Here is the response which the females used to tease other males through their academic competence:

- i. Girls are always better than boys and they care for their study more. (elbanat daiman ashtar wabihtamin bidrastehn akt^har min elawlaad.)

C. Describing the teased target as an animal or something bad: Here is the response which the females used to describe other males as an animal:

- i. Whenever you grow older, you become like a turtle. (kul ma btekbar, bitsier zai assulhafah.)

2.2.2 Males' responses revealed that they employed a number of teasing expressions to tease females.

The analysis of their responses showed that they employed:

A. Physical appearance: Here are some of the responses concerning the physical appearance which the males used to tease females.

- i. What would you do if God had given you more beauty? (lao allah ma'teeki shwaiet halah, shu bitsawi?)
- ii. You are not neat. This girl is more beautiful than you are. (anti lasti aniqah. hai al fatah ajmal minki.)
- iii. God Heavens. How short you are! You are like dwarfs. (ya haram ma aqsarik, zai al aqzaam.)
- iv. Is the color of your eyes natural? Or are these lenses? (lawn 'yunik tabi'i wila 'dasat?)
- v. It seems that you applied more makeup today. (shaklik mekt^hreh elmikiaj elyawm.)
- vi. How old are you? (kam 'omruki?)

B. Underestimation/Insult: Here are some of the responses which the males used to tease females' through underestimation or insult:

- i. You are disgraceful. (btexzi.)
- ii. You are naïve. (inti miskieneh. inti 'la niatik.)
- iii. God never tribulate me with one like you. (allah la yiblini biwahidah zaik.)
- iv. God mercy your grandfather who used to think that the telephone was a bomb. (allah yarham jidik, kan yfaker inu altalaphone qunbuleh.)

C. Describing the teased target as an animal or something bad: Here is the response which the males used to describe other females as an animal in order to tease them:

- i. You look like a dead monkey. (inti bteshbahi alqird almaiet.)
- ii. Damn you/Shit. You look like everything, except girls. (maleh tmilek. bteshbahi kul shi ma 'ada el banat.)
- iii. Your hair looks like a straw sweeper. (sha'rik mithl muknesat al qash..)
- iv. Your hair looks like the hair of the sweeper. (sh'rik mithl kushet almuknesah.)

D. Clothing: Here are some of the responses which males used to tease females' clothing:

- i. Your clothes are not beautiful. (libsik mish hilu)
- ii. Your clothes are not socially accepted. (malabisik g^hair maqbolah ijtim'ian)

E. Academic competence: Here is a response which males used to tease other females' academic competence:

- i. Laughing at the target female when she gets a low mark. (addihik 'alihaa 'indama tahsulu 'la 'lameh mutadeniah)

2.3 Question three: What are the responses and reactions to some teasing expressions employed by same-sex participants?

As mentioned in the data collection part, during the fourth and fifth intervals of collecting the data necessary for the study, the researcher selected two same-sex teasing expressions provided by the participants and asked other participants how they would respond to these teasing expressions. So; he asked the participants the following questions; the first was directed to male respondents and the second was directed to female respondents.

In analyzing the respondents' responses to this question, the researcher judged each response/reaction according to its general meaning. The general meaning of the response might give a positive reaction, a negative one, or a mixed response in which the reaction starts with a positive reaction and the switches to negative one or vice versa.

2.3.1 What is/ are your response/responses to the following expressions?

a: Your eyes are like glass-balls, and your ears are like satellite gleaners. ('yunak zai ad dwahel wa ad^haank zai lwaaqet as satellite)

- i. This is part of your good morals. (had^ha min husu axlaqak.)
- ii. This is of your descent. God increase your good deeds. (had^ha min aslak, wa allah yekt^her xeirak.)
- iii. Every container exudes what it has. (kul inaa bima fihi yandah.)
- iv. A person expresses himself and how he was brought up. (ashaxs yo'ber 'n nafseh wa 'la mad^ha taraba.)

Responses i-iv revealed that the reaction to the teasing expression was positive as the respondents did not tease back or react sharply.

- i. Your eyes are like a thief's eyes and your ears are like Sharshabeal's ears. ('yunak zai 'yun elharami a adhaank mithl adhaan sharshabeal.)
- ii. Damn your great grandfather, son of an animal. (wallah lal'n jid jid jidak ya ibn ad dabehe.)

Responses v-vi revealed that the reaction to the teasing expression was negative as the respondents responded with a tease back or reacted sharply.

- i. Look in the mirror and see your eyes. (ruh itla' bilmiraah wshoof 'yunak.)
- ii. God's tatter. God's mercy! Your ears are of wide bread. (xilqet allah, ma shaa allah adhaanak min ishraq.)

Responses vii-viii revealed that the reaction to the teasing expression was mild and consisted of a positive part and a tease back.

b: Damn you. Your beard looks like the ram's beard. Sab'ak bi halihiyah mit^hl lihiyah at tais)

- i. God know how educated you are and (ma shaa allah 'liak shu mthaqaf wamraba wa iben asel.)
- ii. Every container exudes what it has. (kul inaa bima fihi yandah.)
- iii. There is neither might nor power except in the hand of Allah. (la hawala wala guwata illa billah.)

Responses i-iii revealed that the reaction to the teasing expression was positive as the respondents did not tease back or react sharply.

- i. You do not really feel ashamed. I do not blame you, I blame those who sit with someone like you. (fi'lan inak ma btistahi 'la halak, waelhaq mish 'leik, elhaq 'li biqod m' wahad zaiak.)

- ii. I swear your beard sweeps a street. (wallah lihitak bitkanes shar'.)
- iii. Damn you, buckle. (sab' ysba'ak ya bziem.)
- iv. God's mercy on your beard, every hair in a valley; or because you do not have hair, you are teased. (ma shaa allah 'la lihitak kul sh'rah bwadi, 'shan haik in the mitdyiq.)
- v. Responses iv-vii revealed that the reaction to the teasing expression was negative as the respondents responded with a tease back or reacted sharply.
- vi. God's tatter or your beard. (Xilqet allah willa lihitak.)

Response viii reveals that the reaction to the teasing expression was mild and consisted of a positive part and a tease back.

2.3.2 What is/ are your response/responses to the following expressions?

A: You are treacherous, and pragmatic. How could donkeys realize how to smell roses? (anti xaineh wa sahibat maslahah, shu: faham elhameer bisham elward!.)

- i. Beauty is the beauty of the soul. Open your eyes well, and you will see a moon in front of you. (eljamaal jamaal arouh, fathi 'yunik malieh, bitshufi qudamik qamar.)
- ii. Mercy. Thanks. (mercy, shukran)
- iii. It is necessary that life changes the person and according to the psychic case through which the person passes, and she is obliged to adapt with changes. (daruri alhaih hia illi bitghier ash shaxs whasab an nafsieh willi bimor fiha ash shaxs wash shaxs modar inuh yetaqlam m' at taghiorat.)

Responses i-iii revealed that the reaction to the teasing expression was positive as the respondents did not tease back or react sharply.

- i. You are mistaken. Whatever I do, I will be more beautiful. Look at yourself and see how you have become. (anti ghaltaneh, shu ma sawait batla' ahla, ma tshufi halik kaif saireh.)
- ii. Seeing you makes flowers fade. (shoftik bitxli elward yedhbal.)
- iii. You are really nonsense. You are not worth respect or sitting with. (fi'lan inik insaneh tafhah ma bititahiqi had yhtarmik yuq'd m'ki.)

Responses iv-vii revealed that the reaction to the teasing expression was negative as the respondents responded with a tease back or reacted sharply.

B: Why have you changed? You used to be more beautiful. (laish metg^haireh? kunti ahla.)

- i. Never remain as is, only God. (la yabqa 'la ma hu illa hu.)
- ii. Really, thanks. ('n jad wallhi shukran.)

Responses i-ii reveal that the reaction to the teasing expression was positive as the respondents did not tease back or react sharply.

- i. Respect of the stupid is leaving them. (ikraam as safieh tarkuh.)
- ii. Those who have something on their head, keep touching it. Don't throw me with what you suffer from. (ili 'la rasuh bathah bihasis 'laiha, la termini bima fiki.)
- iii. Look at yourself in the mirror and see who is similar to the donkey. See yourself. When you catch a flower, it fades. (shufi halik bilmrayieh mean bishbah elhmaar, shufi halik lama btimski elwardeh btidhbal.)
- iv. Why have you befriended me? Have you ever seen a donkey befriended with a horse? (wlaish msahbietni, 'mrik shufti hmaar masaheb hsan?)

Responses iii-vi revealed that the reaction to the teasing expression was negative as the respondents responded with a tease back or reacted sharply.

3. Discussion of the findings

3.1 Discussion of the first question

The findings of this question showed that both female and male respondents employed six categories of teasing to tease others of the same sex. The two groups crossed only in two of these forms of teasing: Underestimation/Insult and Physical appearance. Underestimation/Insult occupied the first rank by both. Occupying the first rank by underestimation/insult by the male respondents could be attributed to their feeling that they are dominant and belong to strong groups that back them if need be, whereas its occupation by the female respondents could be as an influence of contact with males and watching TV for a long time.

The findings of this question indicated that this study arrived at new teasing categories /forms utilized by both sexes to tease the teased target of the same sex. The females utilized Underestimation, Physical appearance, Criticism, Imitation, and Clothing. The males utilized Physical appearance, Cursing, Rumor, Underestimation, Relationships, and Describing the teased target as an animal or a thing. The use of these teasing categories/forms indicates that female respondents are more concerned with Academic competence than male respondents do. They, furthermore, pay more attention to Clothing and how other females speak or walk than males do. Clothing and Imitation are always exposed to criticism by others, especially, females. Females mostly tend to appear in a better form than they are. Thus, they try to cope with other females through speaking a different accent or dressing in a more civilized way or walking in certain style. These actions form an exposure to criticism by others if there is need to tease some female.

On the other hand, male respondents used Cursing, Gossip, and relationships as forms of teasing because they mostly form groups that work hand in hand against other groups. They exchange curses among themselves easily as joking first. Then, this might develop in case of disagreement in the same group or with people from other groups. These forms of teasing employed by males are more effective and imply stronger embedded meanings than those employed by females. Therefore, males' teasing forms might lead to disagreement, hatred, aggression, and in some case to fighting.

When comparing the findings of this question with previous literature, we find that they agree partially with some of the literature which investigated the phenomenon of teasing. They agree with Thweat (1997) in that the findings to this question revealed that the sample of the study utilized Clothing and Academic Competence (Grades). They also agree with Cash (1995), Kelly and Cohn (1988), Tizard, Blachford, Burke, and Plewis (1988) in Academic Competence which they called "Intellectual Performance".

3.2 Discussion of the second question

The findings to this question revealed that females utilized only two forms of teasing to tease males. They employed Academic competence and Underestimation/Insult. The Underestimation/Insult expressions mostly focused on behaviors, personality, and appearance. This use of expressions supports the findings of the first question and ascertains that females care a lot for academic competence and appearance.

Male respondents utilized four forms of teasing to tease females. They employed Academic competence, Clothing, Physical appearance, and Underestimation/Insult. This shows that males use the same teasing forms which females themselves use to tease each other. Most of the teasing expressions used by males to tease females focused on the physical appearance which forms the source of pride among females, especially, females at the university.

The exchange of teasing forms cross-sex might be more hurtful to females more than to males. This might lead to unexpected results, such as shy females might leave the university.

The differences in using these categories of teasing among Jadara University students could be attributed to the cultural background represented by the Arabic Language which is rich in social speech acts. Furthermore, it could have resulted from the latest TV programs and shows whose main aim is to entertain people whereas these programs are full unacceptable phrases and words that do not suit all ages.

3.3 Discussion of the third question

Females' responses to the two teasing expressions were different. Their responses to the first teasing expression revealed more positivity than negativity while their responses to the second question showed more negativity than positivity. The positivity in the reaction to the first teasing expression could result from the respondents' understanding that this expression expresses an opinion of a certain behavior which might be wrong, and the respondents might have been so confident in themselves that they were not so. But their negativity in reacting to the second teasing expression could have resulted from the fact that this teasing expression describes the appearance which is the main source of pride to any female, especially if she is a university girl. The negative responses reflect some kind of aggressiveness in them.

Males' responses to the two teasing expressions were different. Their responses to the first teasing expression revealed more positivity than negativity while their responses to the second question showed more negativity than positivity. I think that although these two expressions show a description of the teased target as an animal or their possession as a thing. The second teasing expression starts with an obscenity unlike the second teasing expression which starts with a descriptive statement which has a lot of metaphorical meanings.

The findings to this question agree with Shapiro et al (1991) in that nearly 50% of the responses indicated negativity. They also agree with Dallinger and Prince (1984) whose study revealed that not all positive goals resulted in positive reaction as some goals resulted in negative reaction while all negative goals resulted in negative reactions.

Finally, the responses of females indicate that they were quieter and wiser in responding to teasing expressions than males. Females provided better responses that express their ability in selecting appropriate words to respond to the teasing expressions thrown at them from irresponsible people.

4. Conclusions

The findings of this study support the findings of previous literature in many different ways. First, teasing is a means of communication; second teasers do their best to select metaphorical words or sentences that express their rhetoric skills in using the language; third, they utilize different teasing categories that could have been meant to show aggression or goofing of the teaser toward the teased target regardless the age or the level of education of the teaser or the teased target.

Females and males vary a lot in the types of teasing categories they employ to tease others of the same sex although the both employ the same number of teasing categories, that is, six. Cross-teasing shows that there can be some impact of social mixing between males and females on utilizing the teasing categories employed mostly among same sex as females tease males by using some teasing categories used by males themselves, and males tease females by using some teasing categories used by females themselves.

Although some teasing expressions are meant to hurt or embarrass the teased target, males and females' positive reaction has started to grow larger which is good in such situations. Finally, there could be some impact of the personality trait on the selection of the teasing expression which the teaser uses. At the same time, there might be some embedded factors that govern and control the reaction of the teased target to the teasing expression such as the mood, avoiding trouble, religious reasons, self-confidence, or not understanding the metaphorical meaning implied in the teasing expression.

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